

A N
ANSWER
T O
A Letter of ENQUIRY
Into
The Grounds and Occasions
OF THE
CONTEMPT
OF THE
CLERGY.



L O N D O N,
Printed for *Nath. Rowe*, and *J. Ro.*
at the Kings Arms in *St. Pauls*
Church-yard, *A.D.* 1671.

And Ralph Thorne
from his father

Oct 3/1877

V. A. 3/185





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Curiosity.

Two Years Old.

L. C. Christie

1841





T H E
PREFACE
TO THE
Reader.



If I were not so Civil to you as the Gentleman I answer, and did not Court you with a preface, you would have little to wonder at: for if you believe the Character which he is pleased to give of men of our Profession to be true: What can be expected from such an ungentle sort of men, whose Education and Improvements are so pit-

The Preface

fully poor and mean? How should we be instructed in what belongs to good manners, who are so unmannerly in the Pulpit? where if any where, it is to be presum'd we dress up our Discourses in their Holiday Apparel, and deliver our selves in the best language that we have. And if that be so blunt and despicable, there is no great reason to hope, that elsewhere we shall better approve our selves.

I know not in how many of our Studies, the Gentleman might find Licoſthenes and the second part of Wits-Commonwealth, (glad am I that I have none of them, and so that frump does not reach me) by the help of which he supposes we make our Sermons: But I dare be bold to believe, he shall find the Academy of Complements in very few; nor any such choice Books, whereby we may render the Prefaces to the Books, which any of us are bold to put out, less ridiculous, than he presumes the Prefaces we make to our Sermons are.

But

But Kind, and Courteous and Gentle Readers (so I find you have been called) I hope you have a better opinion of us: if not, I must needs pray you, out of pity to me to have as good an opinion of us as you can. I am not so foolish as to boast, that if you will read over what I have written, you will find the Gentleman mistaken very much, and that he does us a great deal of wrong, and that we are as good men as himself, and that we have reason to quarrel with the world because we are no more admir'd and honour'd, or any the like things: But honestly and plainly give me leave to say what in good earnest induced me, to undertake what I have performed, viz. a contemplation of such things as follow.

First, I consider the Serviceableness of the Clergy does much, very much depend upon the Credit and Esteem that we can have in the world. Where we meet with any so good natur'd as to bear any good Respect to-

The Preface

and us, though it be rather for the Honourablenesse of our Employment, than for any Worthinesse they can discern in our Persons; this favourable Opinion they have of us, will greatly dispose them, the more readily to receive the Instructions we follow them with. But they who are prejudiced at us, and entertain any vile thoughts of us, will very hardly be perswaded by us. It was not because Micaiah's Prophecie was more unlikely than Zedekiah's, but because Ahab had afore conceiv'd hatred against him, that he would not yield to him. Wherefore it concerns us to study what we can to preserve our Credit. The Gentleman hath done well in joyning our Credit and Serviceablenesse together, it being undoubtently true, that the same thing which lessens our Value, will obstruct our Serviceablenesse.

Now it seems to me, (and I have given a farther Account of it) that the Letter I enquire into, will probably

to the Reader.

bably do us this unkindnesse, to make us more obnoxious and contemptible than yet we are. The Style and manner of it is enough to provoke willing Readers to make us their Table-talk, not in order to our amendment, but to our farther disgrace. There are many of our Countrey Neighbours, who seldom or never see any Playes: But I fancy his Letter looks like such a piece of merriment sent among them into the Countrey. And possibly is hath been accounted none of the most unsavory Sauces to their late Christmas Chear, even the Discourse that hath been created by this Letter among those who have read it. Wherefore that that little Service which we are yet able to do among our people may not come to none at all, I have adventur'd to enquire, whether a great part of our Contempt be not undeserved.

I consider moreover, that it cannot be reasonably said, This is but an Innocent Piece of Mirth, and such as

The Preface

cannot without perversnesse be quarrel'd at. Or, there is a great deal of Truth in it, and that which is not true may be born with, supposing the Design be to make us more wary for the time to come. This may be said, and to this it may be replied: That all things which are true, are not fit to be said at all times. I know those that have been upbraided as lukewarm men, and betrayers of the Truth, &c. who have declar'd themselves to be of this opinion, that some Truths may sometimes for peace sake be conceal'd. But it is not only true, but a truth of great Import in order to the good of the World. And if for that, then also for other reasons. Cui bono is a right good question for any man to propound to himself in all he undertakes. So that if it were true, unless the Author could probably think he might do some good Service to the Church in this Essay, he had better have been cracking of Nuts all the while, they would not so much have hurt his teeth,

to the Reader.

teeth, as his teeth have hurt me. But if he did so think, (for if I know him at all, I know him to be an honest Gentleman) it may not be labour lost to discover how unsuccessful his Design is like to prove as to any good Ends.

Yea again, if all were true, yet the manner of it is somewhat unkindly and unhopseful. Who of us is like to be much the better for this kind of dealing? and who among those that despise us, will be cured of that Humour by any thing he shall find in the Letter.

But when I farther consider that all is not true, that we are not so contemptible as is represented; I thought it fitting to say what I thought might be said in our Defence. They have a proverb, that If you tread but upon a worm, it will turn again, (though in truth there is little design in that creature) And wherein are we worse than Worms, that it should not be lawful for us to labour our own Vindication?

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So



The Preface.

So then, that I have propounded a good end to my self, I am sufficiently confident. If there be any thing wherein I am to beg the Readers pardon. and to fear their Censure, it is in this, that I did not let this Task, alone to be perform'd by some better hand, it may be some of the Learned Clergy will be so tender of the Reputation of their meaner Bretheren, as to take the Gentleman to task. It may be a nimbler Pen and a readier Wit than mine, will concern themselves in this Affair. It may be so, but it is more than I know of. And therefore what I have done is like my self, that is like one who is out of the world of Books, who do so little know what Books are coming out this next Term, that I know but few of those that are already extant. It may be also I have betray'd my self to be one who little understands the temper of the World; and if I could imagine that what I have written would be

To the Reader.

So little enquir'd after and so meanly thought of as very possibly it may be, I would have thought it enough to suffer the Contempt under which (together with the rest of our Order) I already am, rather than by my Indiscretions have made the Case still worse. Be it as it will, I look for but little Credit, and I fear no great Discredit.

But I must not forget, that a little Preface is big enough for a little Book; Wherefore I forbear to tell my Reader how unexpectedly I have been diverted since I first intended any thing in this kind; and what other things I have to say in excuse, why I have no more lickt it over. I have this only to say; I thought it would please the Stationer to have it exposed to Sale this next Term: Therefore I have made haste, and I wish it to be no more haste, than good speed.



BY reason of the Authours great
distance from the Press, 'tis
likely some Faults are slip't uncor-
rected; for which the **PRINTER**
craves the Readers pardon.





*An Answer to a Letter of Enquiry
into the Grounds and Occasions of
the Contempt of the CLERGY,*

S I R,



THAT the Clergy of
England are unhap-
pily despised, either
you do truly believe,
and affectionately be-
wail, or you do very
vainly, if not hypocritically too, en-
quire into the Grounds and Occasi-
ons of that Contempt I do readily
believe, (notwithstanding your fre-
quent *Drollings* which might tempt
some severe men to doubt) that you
are in good earnest; and I am so well
perswaded of the truth of many
things you say, that one design of
what follows, is to adde acknow-
ledgements in confirmation of them:

But whether in all things you have said well, may deserve to be farther enquired into. May may deserve it; but to say whether or no it do deserve it, is great boldness in one, who for several years hath had no higher Title than that of a *Contrey Vicar*. If we Countrey Ministers be but half so ignorant as you suppose, it cannot be less then presumptuous Arrogance, for any of us to make a Judgement upon a Discourse so Ingenious and Learned as you have blest the world with. Yet because there is a certain Scribling Humour possesses some men, with which I am now infected, I beg your leave to animadvert upon some passages in your *Letter*; yet alwayes *premissing*, (which is you know an old wont in our preachments) that I shal endeavour to speak with that modesty, which becomes a poor ignorant Countrey Minister; not presuming too determine resolutely, but only a little to enquire into some things, which may possibly

possibly be true, if I had understanding enough to discern the truth of them.

You seem, Sir, to abuse us for *dividing* our *Texts*, and you may with as much reason laugh at my *sheddings* a *Letter*. But every man in his own way. We have been used for the helping of our dull Understandings and weak Memories, to cast our thoughts into some certain Method; and if besides this, now and then a little *Pulpit Language* and *Phrase* creep unto a *Letter*, you will pardon a man that does not *recedere ab arte sua*. Wherefore I shall enquire;

First, whether you have sufficiently reckoned up the Grounds and Occasions of that Contempt under which we ly?

Secondly, Whether there be so much ignorance in us as you suppose?

Thirdly, whether that Ignorance that is proceed from all those things which you assign as the Causes of it?

Fourthly, whether all those be faults

faults that you do so nimbly squib us for? Or if they be; Whether we be guilty of all you reckon?

Fifthly, if so, whether you have taken a likely course to deliver us from this Contempt? For the rest, we will agree as well as we can; and if I can hit of the Tune, I will bear a part with you in *Alas poor Scholar, &c.*

First, Sir, What reason have we to thank you, that you take notice of no other Occasions of the *Contempt of the Clergy*, but the *Ignorance* of some, and the *Poverty* of others of us? Nay, you plainly say, that it proceeds from no other cause, Page 3 *If I be not very much mistaken* Whatever hath heretofore, or does at present lessen the value of our Clergy, or render it in any degree less serviceable to the world then might be reasonably hoped, may be easily referr'd to two very plain things; the *Ignorance* of some, & the *poverty* of others of the Clergy. Do you not hereby

to

too much excuse those who despise us? Might not one piece of your Declamation have spent it self upon the Untowardness, and Peevishness, and Prejudices of Vulgar people? Could you not have jeer'd the Laity a little, and told them of their faults? But there are two ends of a Prospective glass; and when you had by one magnified *our* Ignorance, and almost insulted over *our* Poverty, you turn the other upon the people; by which, if possibly they may have some faults, yet they become so small, and at so great a distance, that you would not easily discern them. But I pray, Sir, though we deserve to be laugh'd at for our Ignorance, yet do we not also deserve to be pittied for our Poverty? And had it not been civil for you to have blamed the people (a little more plainly then you have any where done) for their Inhumanity in trampling upon those who are already on the ground? What if you had

had taken our part, and told the World, that it is the fate of Worthy men sometimes to be in Distress and Poverty; therefore where it happens that Ignorance and Poverty; are not joyn'd in the same person, a little of your flexanimous Rhetorick might have been spar'd, to have inclin'd the hearts of our Parishioners not to despise us for that which we cannot help. Or if you had pleased, you could have turned your stile, and appeared in *Satyr* against those base spirited men, who will seek occasions to reproach us: And while you had been doing this, you would have found somewhat else besides Jewels, in the ranking of such Dung-hills. The occasions of the *Contempt* of the *Clergy* are not only on our part ignorance & poverty; but on the part of our contemners there is frowardness and ill-will, and somewhat else beside, which I shall put you in mind of by and by.

In the mean time, I make no doubt, but you who so well under-

stand the state of the mean and inferior Clergy, as that in a very little time (I say) you could procure Hundreds that should ride both Sun and Moon down, and be everlastingly that Gentlemen, that could procure them a Living but of 25 or 30 a year, are much better acquainted with those of the better sort, who are fitter Company for a Gentleman of your parts and learning. You know some who are neither Ignorant nor poor, and what becomes of them? Are they honoured as much as we are despised? Are all mens mouths full of their praises? Have they that plurality of Honour which their double Excellency qualifies them for? I fear you do not find it so: The learned Doctor when he rides abroad to take the Air, may have a Cap and a Leg, and a sullen look over the left shoulder together with it, and peradventure the rattling of his Coach may preserve him from hearing himself abused,

abused, and the distance that he keeps from his Neighbours, may hide the knowledge of it from him, but even beardless Boys shall frump him, and the Rascally Multitude shall curse him as soon as he is past by. Say, Sir, do you not know in this present age, and have you not heard that in former ages, many learned and once wealthy Clergy-men, have been accounted, as well as the *Holy Apostles, the fish and off-scouring of the World?* Do not their rude parishioners (think you) in their Chimney corners, over a Pot and a pipe, liberally reproach them, and it addes well to their mirth that they can, out of their hearing abuse their Ministers. If any such thing may be, then are we to seek for other occasions, of the *Contempt of the Clergy*, than *Ignorance and Poverty*; for where neither of these are, where any of our Brethren are so happy as to be rich enough to buy Books which have made them wise, and to be

be wise enough to grow rich; yet have they not hereby purchased a sure title to Reputation and Esteem. There are those who do not love our *Cass*, and will pick holes in it, though it be not thread-bare; and there are dirty-mouth'd Fellows, will calumniate so strongly, that all the Books in an University Library shall not teach a man wit enough to wipe it off. And then the ground and occasion of all this Contempt, is in those who are active, not in those who are passive in it.

You will tell me, Sir, it may be, that the Ignorance and Poverty of some, reflects to the disparagement of the rest of the Clergy: but what reason is there for this? There is a Doctor or two in our Neighbourhood, very learned men, and well to live, (as we say in the Countrey) divers of us that live near them are mean and inconsiderable, and scarce worthy to be Readers to the Reverend doctors; do you think that they
are

are the more slighted for our sakes? In reason one would think they should be the more admired; when the World sees by comparing of us together, what worthy men they are & how few can equal them. Because there may be a Duncie or two in Trinity Colledge, shall therefore the ~~Worthy~~ Scholars be stopp'd their Degrees as if they were all for? If such a thing should happen, it were the iniquity of the ~~Poster~~, and not want of Scholarship in the Lad, that does him the injury, So that still if some men are slighted for the Imperfections of others, the evil temper of the censurers takes the occasion, where the person contemned gives none. But, Sir, the truth is, there is somewhat else in the Clergy besides ignorance and poverty, that exposes them to contempt, which because you are so civil as not to mention, I will pass over in silence too, and not betray the infirmities of my Brethren.

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We may yet suppose the case better: There is a great number of Clergy-men, who together with their Learning and Estates, are more considerable for somewhat else, better than both them, as being men of great Integrity, and of very good lives; and how goes the World with them? If it appear that they are also Undervalued, it must remain evident, that there are other occasions of this Contempt, than what the Clergy give, and they are such as are out of their reach to remove. It is not beyond the memory of man, what deplorable sufferings the Clergy of *England* hath laboured under. You have read (I am to presume) *Bishop Hall's hard measure*, and know with what rudeness and insolencies, the patience of his contemporary Prelates was tryed. When you consider how the Book of the incomparable *Chillingworth*, was in a zealous contempt to his person, thrown

thrown into his Grave and buried with him, (which I confess I have only by Tradition;) when you read the raillery of one of the Defenders of *Sacred Harmony* against *Bishop Hall*, and above all, the famous adventure of *Beighton*, in his *Sion's Plea* against the *Prelacy*, and many the like unworthy things; and add to all this, with what contempt and scorn an Episcopal man, (a *God-Almighty-man*, as I have heard some of them in derision called) was almost hooted at in the Streets; you will confess, that there have been Clergy men most excellently accomplished every way, who have yet been undervalued as the dirt of the Streets, though no defect on their part, gave any occasion for that Contempt. And still it continues, and so is like to do, notwithstanding any remedy that your letter directs to, to be the case of many men both wise and honest, and if not rich, yet not poor neither, who happen amongst

amongst unmannerly and rud people, with whom though they take never so much pains, and wait for the good effect of it with a great deal of patience, yet are Clownishly dealt with, and not so much respected as a Greyhound or spaniel, that their Neighbour-Farmer keeps of his Land-lord.

Nay, Sir, I will venture farther a little to make it appear, that *Ignorance* and *Poverty* are not the only grounds of Contempt, for some Clergy-men are as much slighted for their great *Learning*, as we of the worser sort are for our great *Ignorance*. Country people have such strange conceptions of Learning that it is not much below a proverb with many of them, *that the greatest Scholars are commonly the Worst Preachers*. And it often comes to pass that if an University man out of kindness and condescension to a Country parson, gives him a Visit and a Sermon, though it be not his

humour to thunder out much *Latine* and *Greek*, though he do not soar up towards the Third Heaven for sublime Notions, nor disturb their ears with great and swelling words, yet if he preach but an University-Sermon, which (as it is to be supposed they all are) is neat and elegant, and handsomly composed, with close connexion of sense and weight and strength of reason, such as requires a Scholar to make a judgement of it, some of the common people may admire him, and say, A great Scholar I'll warrant him; but there is a sort of people who are not much capable of close reasonings, will flight such a Sermon; and they who will do us the credit to write after us with a great deal of bustle and eagerness, will put up their tackling, and think the strange Minister is much beholden to them, if they can forbear sleeping under such a dry Sermon. Sir, Things are not judged of always as they are, the

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temper and humours of men are very divers one from another, and as many on the one hand are pitifully thought off for their want of Learning, so sometimes Learning it self is in disgrace. The World is well and comfortably amended since *Græci nonne suspensum erat, Hebraice prope hariticum*: But there are particular men have as little kindness for Learning now as the greatest part of men had in the dayes of old: And we can be even with the University men when they come into the Country for all the abuses their *Prevailers* put upon us at Commencements: some of our Parish shall have as dry hobs for them, and Learning it self shal bear part of the burden together with Ignorance. If they are not both equally guilty, yet neither of them are quite free from being an occasion of the Contempt of the Clergy.

I have not yet, Sir, waded very deep, nor enquired into the more

remote and hidden causes of this Contempt, If you please to let the search be continued yet a little farther, it will be found that whether *Ignorance* and *Poverty* be in the case or no, there are thole who do designedly despise us and as they have orderd the matter, it is for their Interest so to do.

And first, the *Church of Rome* hath somewhat to answer for in this case. They have *Emissaries* here in *England*, who first craftily, and in a disguise bespatter us, and then perswade the people to hiss at us, So some men who are wiser then your ordinary shallow Country Parsons, suppose that the new Lights of the *Quakers* came first out of the dark Lanthorns of the *Papists*. The *Church of England* resuming her just Rights and antient privileges, and returning to her pristine state of Independency upon the *Church of Rome* hath continued in great glory, (excepting one Eclipse

clipse) for more then this hundred years. The defence upon all this Glory, next to the goodness of God and the successive vigilance of our Sovereign Defenders of the Faith and the renewed care of our Renowned Parliaments, hath been the Learned Clergy of *England*, besides what Foreign Divines have done, the Writings of *Jewel, Whitaker, Reynolds, Lawd, Usher, Morton, Hall, Prideaux, Chillingworth*, and many others, some dead, and some still alive, (whom our little holes over the *Queen* will not half hold) have nobly fortified us against all the *Roman* Batteries: wherefore they have tried if by sinking a Mine they could blow us up, if they could blast the Credit and Reputation of the Clergy, and thereby get some advantages against our Church. For which purpose they have endeavoured to invalidate our orders. They would perswade that since the times of *Queen Mary*, we have had no

Regular Ordination; the first Bishops of *Queen Elizabeth* not being rightly Ordain'd nor Consecrated, had no Power to Confer that upon others, which they had not themselves. If this design had prosper'd, they had done their business. The very foundations of our Honour, and Reputation, and Reverence, had been ratted, if our Clergyship had been destroyed; but this ~~was~~ was discovered and made useless, as by others, so especially by the Labours of the Industrious *Armen*. Then they tried to weaken the Repute of our Learning, and many odde tales they tell, what pitifull Universities, and what an Ignorant Clergy (if we will so call them) we have, in comparison of theirs. But it is a foolish thing to laugh at an Enemy before we know the strength of his Weapon, or the skill of his hand. Our redoubted Knights have vanquished the Giants. Our Champions have met them

them in open field, and encountred them by honest force and by plain strength overcome, and beat them into their lurking holes. But then follows the knack of knacks. They dresse themselves in their Retiring-rooms after divers fashions; and from one corner comes out a Shaven-pate converted with a periwig: He walks the streets all the City over, and discourses of his Travels, and greatly pitties the Clergy of *England*, that they fall short of the Honour, which the Priests beyond the Seas meet with. Then he insinuates as far as he dare trust his Company, that for divers reasons it cannot be expected, that any of us, though never so deserving men, should be revered so much as they in *Italy* are; and slyly takes all occasions to magnifie the Splendor, and advance the Reputation of the *Church of Rome*, that he may thereby at last bring us into Contempt.

From another apartment of the

Denſpring me out half a ſcore Saints
 that have renounced the Pomps and
 Vanities of the World, ſuch as are
 Hatbands and Ribbons, and Lace,
 &c. And no body would think they
 would be Panders to the *whores* of
Babylon, they look ſo honeſtly.
 They ſprinkle a little (the better to
 deceive) their *Billingsgate* Rhetor-
 rick, with ſome prophecies againſt
Antichriſt, and *Idolſtry*, and *Popy*
 But down go the rotten Miniſters
 of *England* root and branch. They
 kill and ſlay all *Baals* Priests. Nei-
 ther our black Coats, nor our white
 Surplices finds any favour with
 them.

“ We are all hirelings, that
 “ preach for gain, dumb Dogs, unleſs
 “ Tythes open our mouths. *The*
 “ *light that elightens every man that*
 “ *comes into the world*, hath forſaken
 “ us; for if we had the Spirit, we
 “ ſhould preach by the Spirit, and
 “ not by words wri ten with paper
 “ and Ink, which are all but a dead
 “ let-

letter. Wherefore because thus
 " we deceive the people, they must
 " come out from among us, that they
 " may not be partakers of our pla-
 gues. Thus they talk, and these
 plagues would without doubt soon
 come upon us, if God would give
 them that power over us, which
 he gave their Father over Job.

All this while, the crafty Jesuite
 who hath set these men on work,
 stands behind the curtain to observe
 the issue; and if by any means he
 can divide and weaken us, or by
 any Instruments throw dirt in the
 face of the Clergy, he claps his
 hands, and rejoyces and says, *Hec
 facit pro nobis*: We shall never
 gain upon England; till the Clergy
 by some means or other grow
 despised.

Sometimes they perswade a zeal-
 ous Minister, who hath no more
 Learning then will do him good, to
 undertake a dispute with a subtile

Priest, who perchance by some quirk or other baffles and non-pluses him, and then presently this reflects to the dishonour of the whole Clergy; as if we had no more able Disputants than they pick out from among us. I enquire after no more of their Devices, though more they have; by any of which if they bring us into disesteem, they serve their own ends and hope to gain the more proselyts to their party. And it might, Sir, have entred into your imagination, considering how sedulous they are, by all Artifices to promote their own ends, that we are not onely accessary to our own shame. Besides our Ignorance and Poverty, we have adversaries who make it their business to lessen our Value, and to obstruct our Serviceableness.

We know, Sir, who they are that think *Bartholomew*-day deserves to be kept as a Fasting-day; & these also have an Interest to drive on, by our discredit,

discredit, though it be such as is
little worthy of the Profession they
make of a severer Sanctity, and a
stricter Conscientiousness, then they
will allow us to excel in. How
happy do they think it would be
for *England*, if they could Perswade
the *Parliament*, that there is need
of them; that the Work of the
Ministry cannot be carried on as it
ought to be, unless they be again
taken into Employment. There is
no great probability, that these Gen-
tlemen will believe all this, till they
come to be more disposed to favour
Conventicles, or to go to them to
hear what is there secretly whis-
per'd to this purpose. But that part
of the people who have charmed
their ears to their tongues, and can
hear them mutter in a corner, when
they do not like the man in the
Surplice at Church, will believe
that such and such things are true,
because such a Good man at such a
Friends house the other day said so,
And

And what do they say? " Oh that
 " Conformable Ministers, the Super-
 " stitious Time-serving Ministers
 " that now are, will never do half
 " so much good by their Preaching,
 " as was done a dozen or twenty
 " years ago. There is nothing such
 " Heart-affecting Preaching now,
 " nothing so much powerfull Pray-
 " er now as hath been in former
 " times. There are not so many Con-
 " verted now ; the Power of God-
 " lineſſe is almost gone out of the
 " Land. The Ark is a going, Oh
 " who will pray for the ſtaying, or
 " rather for the returning of the
 " Ark? Oh who will ſee to a helping
 " hand by their Prayers, that the
 " faithfull Miniſters may be reſtor'd
 " again !

Sir, I do not make my ſelf merry
 in fancying that I do a piſhly Imitate
 this kind of men. It grieves my
 ſoul to think that they ſhould thus
 labour to ingratiate themſelves
 into the affections of the Vulgar,
 to

to the discouragement of us in our Work. But either they who follow and admire them do them wrong, or else they do at this rate strive to raise their own Credit upon the ruine of ours. I do not accuse them all, There is a good number of them who give us all fair respect, and comply with us a good way, and we thank them for it. But there are also some who are a little peevish, and do not onely strive to lessen our Value; but to hinder us also in our being serviceable among our people; both which you lay to the charge of our Ignorance and poverty as if they were alone guilty. I think, Sir, what ever our Poverty may, yet our Ignorance is never the greater for all this. But where our Credit is concern'd, it is not what we are, but what we are represented, and believed to be, that either greatens or lessens it. And so long as such dissatisfactions remain, and some men hold up their party firm to
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them, by dealing thus boldly with us, when you are pleas'd to enquire after every thing that lessens our Value, and hinders our Serviceableness this might have been taken in, or if you had not car'd to mention it, you would have said enough, if our Ignorance and Poverty had been onely some, or the main of those things that lessen our Value, and not the onely things.

There is yet another sort of men who do us great disservice. They are your *Blades*, the foully vicious, and notoriously debauch'd persons, the Gallants that can damn and confound us in their Curses with as great pleasure, as we do with sadness admonish them of their danger, according as the Holy Scriptures give us Authority. Some there are, who resolving never to be better by any good Instructions, think it their Interest to slight us; because by lessening our Value, they may lessen our Serviceableness too.

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The meaner thoughts they have of us, the more contentedly they may excuse themselves in not practising our Doctrine. It is not always Ignorance or Poverty of the Preacher, it is sometimes the *Wickedness* of the *Hearer* that Administers the Occasion of this Contempt. When men resolve to walk on in the *Counsel of the Ungodly*, it facilitates their course, to sit down sometimes in the *Seat of the Scornfull*. It it may happen once in a Month, that the preacher may make use of some Ungentle and not very Scholarlike Phrase or Comparison, that shall be remembered and brought up so long, till all that was serious and grave is slid away without making any impression. And I do much fear that from hence proceeds a great deal of that scorn that is cast upon us, Your *Hellors Rampants* are too courageous to be frightened by every *Puling Parson*. And I persuade my self. that if our blessed Saviour

him-

himselfe, should come again into the World in the same manner as he did before, though he should again speak as *never man spake* yet there would be found those who would deride and set him at naught: now, as much as they did of old. Wickedness is bold enough, but yet it is witty too: because it is a great step to uncontrolable debauchery, to have an opinion, that the Preachers who recommend a holy life, are contemptible persons, therefore by this method, do men pawn themselves to the Devil, viz. by being Divelishly disposed to affront any thing that is better than themselves. Wherefore again somewhat else is sometimes the occasion of the Contempt of the Clergy, and not only our Ignorance and poverty.

Sir, I could have let all this pass, but that it seems to me, you have by this stating the case done us a great unkindness, if not some wrong. You suppose we are contemn'd, it is

is too true; You concern your self to
 enquire in to the occasions is, of it as if
 you were willing to remedy it, but
 I doubt so preposterously, that if
 some body do not seek to lessen the
 value of your Letter, that will so far
 as it is believ'd still more lessen our
 value. Me thinks I can without in-
 spiration prophecy what greetings
 we must look for, from some of
 those who do so *jellily* condemn us,
 if we happen to meet them with
 your Letter in their hands. "Look
 you here Parson, have you seen this
 "Book? Here is a very learned Gen-
 "tleman that loves you wel, and is
 "sorry to see you so much despised;
 "but (then it is a great hazard if
 "he do not flammer out an
 "Oath) it is all your own fault,
 "he hath made it as plain as the
 "Sun that your own circumstances
 "expose you to Contempt. He can
 "find nothing to blame us for,
 "whatever lessens your value is in
 "your selves, You are a great many
 "of

“ of you a company of dull ignorant
 “ Blockheads, and poor mean
 “ inconsiderable fellows: You
 “ think much that you are not
 “ courted and reverenc’d, you may
 “ soon have as much as you deserve
 “ If therefore you are slighted, sink
 “ in your sorrows pity your selves,
 “ and do not blame us.

If any such thing happen, I believe
 you love us so well, that you will
 wish you had reflected a little
 upon others. I am confident you
 do not excuse those who may thus
 abuse us I would you had not said
whatever lessens our value is our Ignorance or poverty; If it be our, mis-
 fortune in which we cannot help our
 selves yet we would have thank’d
 you, if you would have chastis’d the
 people a little, especially for their in-
 solency in contemning those who
 are neither *Ignorant* nor *Poor*.

Having thus far, Sir, given your
 saying, it is now time to enquire.

Secondly, Whether the Clergy
 of *England* be so Ignorant as you

suppose. Ignorance is bold and
 assuming, and they who are given to
 it, do no where more betray it, than
 in their confident pretences to wit
 and learning. So peradventure while
 I am excusing my Brethren, I may
 do them no other good but this,
 viz. adde to their company, by pro-
 ving my self one of their number.
 But because my hand is in, I will do
 my weak endeavour (but alwayes
 with submission to your better
 Judgement) to make it appear, that
 the present Clergy of *England* is not
 so ignorant as you suggest, at least
 not so grossly simple as thereby to
 become ridiculously contemptible; or
 to be rendred incapable of doing
 service. You acknowledge there
 are some Learned men among us,
 but do not think it reasonable that
 the Learning of a few, should expiate
 for the Follies of the rest, or make
 such full satisfaction, as that the
 whole number should be reputed
 Learned. Good Sir, allow me the
 same

same favour, and I freely grants
 Among the many 1200 Clergy-men
 that are in *England*, Divers may be
 dull and heavy, but why should this
 reflect more upon the whole body
 of the Clergy to their dishonour,
 than the Learning of some does to
 their honour. That which is to be
 considered, is what the generality
 of us appear to be; so I hope to offer
 somewhat to your consideration,
 that may deliver the present Clergy
 of *England* in the whole, take them
 one with another, from being ac-
 counted despicably Ignorant.

And first, Sir, it is manifest that
 the *English* Clergy is much improv'd
 in Learning since the beginning of
Queen Elizabeths Reign, The time
 was within less than these 20 year
 when *Oxford* her self was so ill
 provided of men fit to Preach, that
 the *Higb-Sheriff* of the County
 being as the times then were a lear-
 ned man came up into *St Maries*
 Pulpit, and in charity to those who
 want-

wanted good Preaching, gave them
 a Sermon, whereof this is the most
 excellent beginning. *Arriving at
 the Altar of St. Maries, in the stony
 Stage where I now stand, I have
 brought you some fine Biskets, baked
 in the Oven of Charity and carefully
 conserv'd for the Chickens of the
 Church, the Sparrows of the Spirit,
 and the sweet Swallows of Salvation.*
 What think you, Sir, have you ever
 a Story in all your Letter more
 ridiculous than this would be, if it
 were a Story but of two or three
 years old? No surely, the meanest
 of our Clergy can out-do some that
 were of greatest repute in those
 blinder times. The way of preaching
 was quite another thing in those
 dayes than it is now. There was
 Learning in that age, but it run ano-
 ther way. Their manner of Preach-
 ing was much meaner. And I sup-
 pose the Ignorance which you be-
 wail in us now, is that which we
 discover in our manner of Preach-
 ing;

ing; for as to other things I do not observe that you reckon us greater Fools than our Neighbours: But we want Learning for the purpose for which we take H. Orders, we do not Preach so as may probably obtain the end of Preaching, which is without doubt the welfare of the Souls of those that hear us. Thus you think. But what then will you say to the state of the Church as it was in *Edward 6.* and *Queen Elizabeths* dayes? (for I will not go so far back as to bewail the state of Religion in former times, when the Priests did not so well understand Latine as to be able to pronounce their Creed right but when they had tumbled over from *Credo in unum deum patrem omnipotentem auctorem*, to the end of the Creed instead of *vitam eternam Amen* they conclude with *hic unum & iterum agn.*) Among the Preachers of *Edward 9* this dayes, few were more famous than *Bishop Latimer*, a right honest
man

man indeed, and a learned man too; but how would you be tickl'd if you should hear such things from any of us, as you may find in his Sermons, The odde Stories he brings in any how, the continual wandering from his Text to tell them what he had a mind to say the *Tiburn Tippets*, and the *Han-gum tumms*, and the *drawing of men round about the Town with a Pudding* his playing at Cards in his Sermon, and making *Hearts Trumps* and what great things his Father did in a Farm of 3, or 4l. *per ann.* and a hundred such kind of things, which would not be thought at all grave now a dayes. Let our Sermons be compar'd to his, and let it be consider'd that he was a preacher to the Court, and one of the principal of them; and then if you seldom hear of any thing so homely in a Countrey Village as that which was then very acceptable in a Princess Court, yield a little to the improve-

provement that is made of preaching in these times. Though now and then a few unhandſome paſſages drop from ſome men, without ſtudy and due conſideration, yet Preachers in groſs are worthy of ſome regard now a dayes, becauſe the Sermons that were of old, though more exceptionable then ours now, found good entertainment when they happen'd in an age of little Preaching. Sir, I diſparage not the good Old man, who had Learning enough in Diſputation to maintain the Proteſtant Cauſe, and had Chriſtian conſtancy enough to dye a Martyr in defence of it. I believe he might do much good by his manner of preaching, becauſe even when he run away from his Text, he went to meet his Hearers; nor do I wonder that he ſhould then be acceptable. That which I conſider him for is, a little to vindicate the way of Preaching that now obtains, as leſs lyable to be deſpiſed than his
was;

was, and therefore though many of us are very Ignorant in comparison of our learned Brethren in City and University, yet me thinks our Ignorance should not make our Persons so despicable, so long as our Preaching is somewhat refined beyond what it was an hundred years ago, or thereabouts.

Yea, Sir, we have this comfort farther, that however you reckon us Ignorant and pitiful Fellows, yet the reverend Fathers of the Church have a better opinion of the present Clergy over whom they exercise a Jurisdiction. The Canons and Articles of our Church, which were established in some of the first Convocations after *Queen Elizabeth* began her Reign, suppose that there were in those dayes divers Unpreaching Ministers, who were not thought of Abilities sufficient to be permitted to open the Scriptures, but were therefore directed to the Reading of those *Homilies*

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which

which were compiled for the supply of this defect. I deny not but many of us may sometimes preach Sermons raw and undigested, and like to be to little purpose, than if we read an *Homily*, if our people would bear it. But me thinks we may a little think well of ourselves, and look upon our selves as got into a higher form than many Divines of those times; because no late convocation hath declar'd so mean an Opinion of our present Clergy, as to refuse them authority to preach, or to enjoin them onely to read *Homilies*.

Sir, I take you to be a wiser man than to have a very Superlative Opinion of your own Wisdom. You will give me leave to believe, that my *Lords the Bishops*, who have better advantages to know then private men; and are also more concern'd to know the Qualities of those whom they Ordain, and License and Constitute, do better under-

det.

derstand what kind of Clergy does
 now Officiate in the Church of
England, then private persons. You
 will also excuse me, if I gather from
 their manner of governing the
 Church, that they do not judge the
 Clergy so foully and contemptibly
 ignorant, as thereby to be made
 little, if at all serviceable in the
 places where they are. Yea, and the
 Opinion that Foreign Divines have
 of the *English* Clergy, is not to be
 despised. The Writings of our
 Practical Divines (many of which
 are very little more Elaborate then
 when they were first preached) are
 in so great esteem beyond the Seas,
 that it hath been much a Practice
 for *Germans* and *Transylvanians*,
 who intend to preach when they
 return back, to come into *England*
 and learn enough of our Language
 for their purpose, which is to
 translate some of our Authours in-
 to their own Tongue, and when
 they get home, it is hard to say,

whether they reckon to do more Honour to our Countrey, or more Service to their own. And I know where a Foreigner of good note and Learning (*Spanhemius*) acknowledges to the everlasting credit of our Nation, that such Books are Translated into other Languages: and that Practicall Divinity is in a manner peculiar to *England*. It may be you will tel me, that if there be any Credit in all this, it concerns but a few, and a great number of the Inferiour Clergy may yet be lamentably ignorant. It may be so, but when others abroad are pleased upon a general Contemplation of the manner which we *English* take in Preaching, to honour as much, and to give us the preheminencie above the preachers of other Countreys; it had not been uncivil in one among our selves, who also may live to be a Countrey Parson himself one day, to have spoken a little more favourably for our Reputation. There

There is yet, Sir, one Argument more from whence may be at least probably infer'd that we are not so stupidly Ignorant as you presume, (i. e.) the great progress that the men of this age have made in other kinds of Learning. What brave things have been done in Chymistry Anatomy, the Mathematicks, Astronomy, and all other Sciences, even such as descend to the great perfection of Trade, where learning hath great influence, though Tradesmen may not be aware of it. The *Virtuosi* have given many degrees of E. noblement to Learning. And if ye knew the gentleman, and will give any Credit to him, who gives an Account of the new Sect of *Latitude-men* in a Letter to his Friend G. B. who I believe may be a kin to your Friend R. L. both feign'd Parsons; he will tell you, that the *World is grown to an infinit desire of knowledge*, and therefore prophesies the progreſſe of the *New*

Philosophy. Yea, you your self are pleased to say, *We are now in an age of great Philosophers, and men of Reason, and of great quickness and fancy.* p. 36. Now Sir, is it not a strange thing, that they who have diverted to other Studies should for a great part prove excellent in their kind able Lawyers, expert Physicians yea and ingenious Poets too: yet only they who settle to Divinity should for the most part be dry and dull, and good for little. I dare say, that when Sophisters take their first degrees, there is no such visible difference among them, as that they who probably will take to other Employments are ingenious and good Scholars; but they who are determin'd to Divinity, are Dunces, and such as have a great favour done them, that they are not slopt.

Sir, by such Imaginations as these, a man who hath a little convers'd with the Clergy of the Countrey, might

might judge that they must needs keep peace with Learned men of other Faculties. And I was willing to say what by a few thoughts upon this matter came to my mind to recover it it might be, some tolerable opinion in the World concerning us. And I will be bold in good earnest to hope, that the number of those who are shamefully Ignorant is not so great, as that it may reasonably reflect to the disparagement of the whole Clergy. Yet after all I must acknowledge, that I do not so little understand how things go, (though I never understood much) as not to believe that there are many, too many, of weak Parts and small Improvements, who have made a shift to climb into the Pulpit, when any seat in the Church would better become them. We do so much betray our want of Learning both publickly, and in our private Converses, that there is no arguing

against Experience. But this you know at least well enough; and therefore, as also because I would fain have so much of a wise man in me, as not to labour to prove my self (among the rest of my Brethren) a Fool, I need not take any pains to inform you of it. I go on therefore to examine the Causes and Occasions, and to enquire,

Thirdly, whether the Ignorance of the Clergy do proceed from those Causes whence you imagine? Or whether instead of them, at least in addition to them, there are not other things worthy to be had in consideration; which if they do not deliver us from the imputation of Ignorance, yet they extenuate the fault, and render us much rather Objects of Pity than Contempt? The School-dames are much engag'd to you, that you would not begin with them; for a Gentleman of your wit could easily have made it out, as well as you have done

done many other things, that the
 pretty methodious Tones where-
 with we recreate a well as affect
 our Flowers out of the Pulpit, have
 their Original from the manner of
 our learning our *A. B. C.* But it
 not being fit you should descend to
 so ignoble a quarrel, the first that
 feel your lash are the school-masters;
 a sort of men who are able to re-
 venge themselves upon you, and I
 will not undertake for some of the
Westminster Boyes, what might
 come in their minds these last Holy-
 daies. The Prosecution of a Poem
 is no light Affliction; they are
 notable Lads at Squibs and Crack-
 ets; and you know there is a keen
 sort of Verse,

*Which Badger-like bites till our
 teeth do meet.*

Ingenious *Cowley* could have
 done such a feat before he went to
 the University. You do therefore
 very wisely to remove *Westminster*
 and *St. Pauls* out of the way of

your indignation, that you may with less danger fall upon Con-
 ary-Schools. Where truly, Sir, I
 have reason to yeeld somewhat to
 you, but not all. Among the many
 Worthy School-masters that are
 in *England*, who make it as much
 their Recreation as their Business,
 to instruct Children. (and no man
 else is fit to be a School-Master,
 but they who take a pleasure in it)
 there is also a company of sorry
 souls, fitter to whistle to a Team
 of Horses, than to teach Boyes;
 the greatest part of whose care is to
 be secure, that their Scholars do not
 pose them in the next Lesson; and
 therefore they have the wit to
 study it themselves first. As once one
 of them told me, when I ask'd him
 how he mannag'd his business: Oh
 (sayes he) well enough. *I know
 where they are to say next, and
 I study enough over night to teach
 my boyes the next day.* I think these
 may a little deserve your Con-
 tempt.

tempt, as well as the Clergy; but
while you let flye at these, you do a-
so declare your dissatisfaction in the
whole Art of ordering Gramar-
School. In which case I beg your
pardon, if I am not of your opinion
in all you say, especially in that
conceit of yours, which concerns
the study of the Tongues at School,
before Lads are admitted at the
University: For I enquire, Sir, ei-
ther learning the *Latine* and *Greek*
Language is necessary or not, if it
be, some good proficiency is to be
made in it at School, or it may be
let alone till afterwards. That there
is a necessity of having some compe-
tent skill in these, you, Sir, of all
men should not deny, who do so
much blame us Country Parsons for
Ignorance, and want of Scholarship.
Indeed you have acknowledg'd it
so much, that I cannot doubt of
your sense. *There is much reason to
value these Tongues before others,
because the best of humane Learning
begin*

have been deliver'd to us in these Languages: And since you car-
 ed to say no more, you had a great
 deal of reason to make that acknow-
 ledgment in honour of that kind
 of Study. But then, Sir, I assume and
 proceed. If Tongues are at any
 time to be studied, why should you
 find fault with Schoolmasters for
 tying their Boys pretty close to it:
 You acknowledge (p. 4.) *the na-
 tural inclinations of Boys to ease and
 idleness.* Wherefore it must follow,
 that they must be a little task'd if
 any good be done with them. But
 you would have them divert some-
 times to other Studies, and *learn
 the Principles of Arithmetick and
 Geometry, &c.* Very good, Sir, let
 them learn as much as they are cap-
 able of, But shall this be done with
 intermitting the Study of *Latin*
 and *Greek*, or not? If they have time
 to do all, let them go on: If not, it
 seems to me, that other Studies may
 better be deferr'd, than the Study
 of

of the Tongues not brought to some tolerable perfection, before they leave going to School; and that for this reason: I believe you do not often find this observation contracted: When boys come up to *Cambridge* or *Oxford* raw in the knowledge of *Greek* and *Latine*, they seldom attain to any Excellency afterwards. The School is the proper place for this kind of Study. When they come at the Colledge to *Logick* and *Philosophy*, and the study of *things*, they are so taken up with being in a new world with phrases and notions which they never heard of before; that they leave behind them Skill in Tongues, as a more jejune and barren kind of Employment.

The more we grow towards men, the more we understand, that words are invented only to signify *things*; and while we are studying the Nature of Things, we gudge the time that is spent in hunting the Ety-

Etymology of a word to its first
Theam. The Understanding that
is in man does indeed early disco-
ver it self, but Memory is the great
Store-house of Understanding. And
if the Memory be sufficiently im-
ployed at School, it will lay a good
foundation for perfecting the un-
derstanding afterwards. If you com-
plain that it is a great dulling to a
quick-pated Lad, to have nothing
else to do, but to reduce the Gram-
mar of his Lesson to some Rule in
his *Syntaxis*; as if their Masters
employ'd them in nothing else, but
*runningly to search out the An-
ecedens and the Relative, &c.* (p.
10.) and did not by degrees inure or
prepare them at least to the know-
ledge of things, under Correcti-
on, Sir, you are much mistaken.
For the Poetry, and History, and O-
ratory that is studied at School, (&
such things are read besides *Janus
Linguarum*) are a most excellent
manudiction to a happy progresse in
Learn-

Learning in elder years. For there is somewhat else in these Books, than accounts of *Achilles* Toes, and the *Grecians* Boots. There is together with the fabulous part of Poetry a great deal of useful Learning there to be found. You may fancy that, that little which is learnt in these things at School, is the reason why they are no more study'd afterwards; and another may with as much reason presume, that B. yes being well initiated in these Books then, will earnestly covet to perfect their knowledge in those things which they began to receive an Impression of under the *Formula*. But then for the pleasure that may be taken in these Studies, I am loath to warrant much, as not knowing what every bodie finds; but if I may guess at others by my self, then I am satisfied, that there is somewhat else beside a Play-day, will make a School-boy cry *Grati-
as*. I remember (though I took
my

my Learning so hardly, that I have ever since been fit for nothing, but to be one of the Ignorant Clergy) that in many a Lesson out of *Florus* and *Juvenal*, and *Tully*, and such kind of School-books, my Master did more gratifie me by opening my Understanding, and preparing for greater degrees of knowledge, then I should have been pleas'd in playing all the week long; knowledge doth insensibly creep upon those who are desirous of it. And while Boys are in the Study of *Greek* and *Latine*, it comes in their way, and offers it self to those, who do not with some violence refuse to entertain it. Wherefore, Sir, do not think the time ill spent, that is taken up in this kind of Study, for according to my poor opinion, if Schoolmasters are any thing chargeable for the Ignorance of the Clergy, it is rather because they send their Scholars to the University, before they can well make a Verse, or
form

form a Greek Verb. or are in some good measure skill'd in the Idioms of the *Latine* and *Greek* Languages, then because they bind them Apprentices to that which you count a Slavery; *the tiresome Repetitions of Amo's and τινι.*

If I would make the worst Construction of every thing, I might imagine by one thing you say, (p. 16.) that thirteen or fourteen years of age is old enough for a Boy to be dubb'd a *Freshman* in the University; but it follows two pages after that *twenty three is the usual after seven years being at the University,* and if you think that time enough for a man to Commence *Master of Arts*, then I have nothing to quarrel in this case; but if you think this usual Age is at the latest, and that if Schoolmasters did their true intent to their Scholars, they might at thirteen or fourteen years be fit to remove; then, Sir, give me leave to suggest, that I doubt you lay as great
a found-

a foundation for an Ignorant Clergy as any you desire to remove. I find Doctor *Hammond* was admitted at thirteen; and being of very pregnant parts, did after rise to somewhat a glorious degree of Learning; And I think I know another very learned man admitted at that age. But for the main, Sir, should Schoolmasters turn off their Boys so soon, it being true what you suppose, that many of their Friends Purles are too short to maintain them long at the University, I much fear that the Clergy would be less knowing then they are, if they should be entered so young into the more abstruse parts of Learning. By that little Observation I have made, I think it is true, that *Ceteris paribus*, of two Lads admitted in the same year, one of fourteen or fifteen, the other of sixteen or seventeen years of Age, the oldest does sooner understand his business; and in less time conquer the difficulties of

of *Logick*, than the younger, and but that I know the Circumstances of all Boys will not bear it, and the opportunities they have of advantaging themselves by the favour of persons of quality would be lost; I am of opinion, it would be better for the Church, if none or but few (the ripeness of whose parts may deserve it, because of the extraordinariness of their proficiency) were admitted till about sixteen years of age into the University; whither when they come you follow them.

And I, Sir, follow you to consider whether the reason why the Clergy is so ignorant, be their being ill mannag'd at the University. You seem to wish that they may be well examined before their Admission; but I believe if you would concern your self so far, you could sollicite and procure (I say no more, because I think you understand what I mean) that a Lad to save his year, should

should without so much as going up to be examined by the Master or Fellows of the Colledge, be admitted upon the bare recommendation of as ignorant a Country Minister as my self; yes, though it were likely he would not come up to continue of a twelve month after.

When they are there, two things you think would contribute somewhat to make us less ignorant, which because you should not think me peevishly willing to contradict and cavil, and carp at every thing you say, I will not gain-say. Only I leave this much by way of Reflection upon them. One of them may be, but it is doubtful whether it would do any good: The other might do much good, but it is not at all probable that it can be effected. If the Heads of the University so pleased, it might with great ease be brought to pass, that Lads should now and then exercise their *English*

as well as their *Latine* Tongue, but it also very probably may be found true, that after this Exercise hath been Probationer a matter of a dozen or twenty years, by experience it may appear, that it will signifie little to the handsomer expressing our selves in the Pulpit, or not more then half a dozen Sermons preach'd in little Country Churches (where young beginners commonly first venture) would do in the case.

For the other practice of quibbling and joaking, it would be the great Interest of us Country Parsons and Vicars, if a Law were made against it. We should not then be so much afraid of what uses to follow, *Oves Sacerdotes Rustici*, in the *Provaricators* speech. And in earnest I yield you, that it turns the temper of many men into froth and vanity. A witty man they say will rather lose his Friend than a Jest. It is well if sometimes he do not lose his
his

his discretion too, if he do not lay
 aside his *Wisdom* to show his *Wit*.
 But when an hundred men have
 complain'd of this as well as you
 and I, there is like to be little cure
 for it. There is a waggish Knavery
 in young Scholars, they are so full
 of a merry conceit, that they will
 be ready to burst, if they be not
 suffer'd to give vent; and if the Ex-
 ercise of the Faculty be stop'd in the
 Schools, yet the Faculty remains,
 and a Lad may sooner be expell'd
 the Colledge, than this Habit ex-
 pell'd out of him. It is an Evil of
 the nature of many others, it is well
 if it were not; but there is little
 hopes but it will still be. And yet,
 Sir, because Wit is a thing out of the
 reach of such an one as I am, I will
 be bold to add, that as there is much
 evil in it which I know, so there
 may be some good in it which I
 know not. It doth not always ne-
 cessarily follow, that *Rope-dancers*
in the Schools prove Jack-puddings
 in

in the Pulpit; sometimes they never come there, their wit prefers them to more Gentile (as the World accounts them) preferments. If they do, they behave themselves very gravely & seriously there: as I could instance in more *Prevaricators* and *Tripus's* than one, but you know them as well as I.

That which follows in your Letter, is rather a discovery of the effects, than the causes of our Ignorance, when you consider how we behave our selves in the Pulpit. Wherefore if those which you have thought good to take notice of, give but an imperfect account of that into which you inquire; It may be worth my while to add a Supplement to them. I will not trouble you by representing how many of those whose ignorance you bewail, have not those things you mention to blame for the causes of it. They were bred up in good Schools, and were well educated at the University

Gty, and were never guilty of making pretences to Wit, while they were Sophisters, but were as far from being able to quibble then, as you think them to be from speaking good Sense now. It might therefore be added, that the dulness of some mens natural parts, together with the short stay they make at the University, (which in truth you have great reason to take notice of) are great reasons of our ignorance: Yet beyond all this, there is somewhat more to be said in the case: for it is manifest, that divers of those who are counted ignorant in the Countrey, before they left the Colledge, were better thought of, and had the repute, if not of excellent, yet of good Scholars. Wherefore under favour, Sir, I think there are three things, beyond what you have considered in this part of your Letter, which do much concur to the keeping of us low in Learning, want of Books, want of time to make

make the best use of those few we have, and want of converse with Learned men. The two first are occasion'd by our Poverty, which you know is great; the third by the places where we live, which hinder us from that correspondence with Learned men, which in Universities and Cities does make some men Scholars, almost whether they will or no.

First, Sir, what marvel is it if our knowledge be as short as our means to know are? What can we do without Books, unless learning were infus'd & inspir'd in us by a Miracle? and how should we, whose Poverty you either pity or laugh at, come by any number of Books? The little time we have spent at the University, was not so idly thrown away, but we have heard of a great number of Books that are in the world, and sometimes out of curiosity (if for no other reason) we would get a sight of some of the

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pu'blick Libraries. There are many Writers whom they call the *Fathers* of the *Church*, and there are some Books (whatever they are) that go by the name of *Councils*. There are also *Schoolmen* and *Commentators*, and abundance of Writers Ancient and Modern, Forreigners and our own Country-men; and if we can but get such a smattering in these, as to be able to distinguish one sort of Writers from another, and to talk a little of them when we come into the company of those who are more Learned than our selves, we acquit our selves well. For alas, Sir, how should we be able to go much farther? If we had these Books, it is not impossible but we might understand them, and we should be willing to read them. But poor we are not able to buy. If once in a quarter of a year, we make a hard shift to spare a shilling to buy such an excellent Piece as your Letter is, it is very fair: but this rises

to little in seven years, we may live a great while before we have a well furnished Library.

Nor if we had it, can we find any great time to make use of it. If we can turn to an Expositor or two (if we have them) to know the meaning of the Text, and be sure that we raise no Doctrines but what do (as we use to say) naturally flow from the words, and can then find time to write down what we intend to say, in giving Reasons of the Doctrine, and the several Uses that may be made of it; in the doing of all this, a great part of the Week will go away, and for the rest we shall have imployment enough for it, in sending about for our Tythe: for by that time, that after ten or a dozen Messages we have got enough of that *same*, to go to Market with the next week, we reckon it a good weeks work. As for the reading of any thing else, than what may just serve to help us make our Sermons,

that is much out of our way. We do pretty equally want money to buy Books, and want time to read those few we have: so that some who are disposed to think charitably of us, will rather wonder we have so much than that we have so little Learning. Yea I believe there are few of those who despise us for our Ignorance, who supposing they had the same incumbrances that we have, would go much before us in knowledge. As to skill in Controversial learning, it is little less than impossible, we should excell in it. We have heard talk of *Socinianism*, and may understand the meaning of it: But *Socinian* Authors are so dear, that *Stillingius*, *Crotlius*, *Volkelius*, and two or three more, are of as great price as some of our whole Libraries. So *Bellarmines* Controversies, and others that concern the quarrel between us and the Church of *Rome*, and such other Books which I have heard learned men talk of

among

among themselves, are of a great price. It is well that a small *German System* or two, (Books which some sort of men can as little contain themselves from having a fling at, though they write but a Letter to a Friend, as the *Non-conformist* can forbear inveighing against *Dietrichs*) and the *Practice of Piety*, and some few other good Books are not very dear, for if they were, *Clarius ab quo libro* would be our Motto. There are I know some of us in more happy circumstances, who have books to read, or money to buy; and if their abundance does not, to be sure their necessities do not hinder them from spending their time among good Books. If these men be not more Learned, than we of the poorer sort, upon themselves be their fault.

Yet neither are these of our Brethren to be wondred at, if though they have good Libraries, their learning does not equal theirs who

daily converse with living Libraries
 Reading of Books will signifie little
 without due meditation upon what
 we read, nor will both together
 avail much, unlesse occasion be some-
 times offer'd, by the company we
 meet with to improve and make
 use of what we have read. Again,
 by bare reading we must rely upon
 our own single Understanding in the
 judgement we make of the Authors
 we read : whereas if we could
 discourse, we should observe the
 sence of others, and make our selves
 wise by their reading as well as our
 own. Now, Sir, though you have
 lived much in the company of lear-
 ned men, yet if peradventure you
 might be born near a Country Vil-
 lage, or may sometimes have some
 Friends to visit in such by-corners;
 then, I pray, the next time you ride
 through a Street remarkable for
 nothing so much, as that haply the
 Church is not charch't as well as
 mo't of the Houses: Consider with
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your self, what comfortless converse as to matters of Learning, is the poor Parson of this Town condemn'd to ? How should a man be a Scholar here ? or if he had somewhat of Scholarship in him before he came hither, how must his Parts, needs rust for want of use ! if he will study for his own Pleasure, he may, but else he may as well call his Hogs in *Latine*, as make any great use of his Learning among his Neighbours; or as well expect Instructions again from the same Swine as hope to advantage himself by the Converse of any of them, unless it may happen that there be a Gentleman or two, or some few ingenious persons in his Parish . Not that we despise our honest Farmers, as you men of Learning cannot but do. If we can obtain the End for which we live among them, to make them better in this World, and to fit them for heaven hereafter ; our satisfaction in doing our Duty, and our hopes

of accomplishing so happy an End, renders our Countrey Lives as pleasurable to us, as yours may be to you, whose Ingenuity & wit makes all the Gentry in the Countrey when you come among them, admire your Person, and covet your Company. So that if you wil give us leave to judge of our own state, we do not think our selves altogether unhappy. But as to the purpose of learning, we acknowledge our selves under a disadvantage. The two former are true of many of us, we want Books, and time to read them if we had them. But the Latter is true of almost all. If Countrey Ministers are not so learned as to free them from contempt, it is not alwayes, because they begin amiss at School, or were unfortunately tutored at the University, the Condition of life which the places we live in determine us to, is the great reason why the Clergy is no more learned.

When

When you have consider'd our Education at the University, upon which you discourse in short, proportionably to the short stay you suppose we make there, you look upon us in our benefices, and require into the manner of our Behaviour in the Pulpit: Where one would think you had been some Gatherer of Eriels, or some such Itinerant Gentleman, who hath had occasion often to visit our Country Churches, you do so well know how we entertain our Hearers. You can tell what a stream of Rhetorick our Metaphor Merchants sail in, who live in a Sea-Town. You know how we transfer up our comparisons in the open and Champion Countreys. You remember too what Trade we drive in great Towns, If I could learn your marks, I would give notice to a couple of Ale-houses in my Parish, who I hope will do me word, if you chance to come in of a Saturday night, (but that I doubt

you wilcome disguised) not like your self, (i. e.) a worthy Gentleman) and I will promise you one of the best Sermons in my budget; for I do not love that my Brethren of the Clergy should generally suffer for an inconsiderate expression or two, that may fall from me among my own people, who I know would take no offence at it.

Many such things you take notice of; but such as make work for another Enquiry.

The question is, Whether all those things you reckon be faults, and whether we be guilty of all those faults you reckon?

First, it may be we are excusable in some of those things which you make your self and others such sport with. I do not say in all of them, for I do honestlie acknowledge to you, that many of those things you have instanced in, are unhandsome, not grave nor becoming our place, When we pretend to speak from
God

God to the people. The Pulpit is an unseemlie place wherein to act the part of Stage-players, and to behave our selves, as if our great design were to exercise the visible rather than rational faculty of our Hearers. The Salvation of the Souls of men is a very serious thing; and the endeavours that are addressed for the obtaining of it, had need be serious and proportionate. It is easie to soar too high after sublime Notions, till we mount beyond the keen of vulgar Understandings. We may also easily sink too low into a dirty and unmanerly way of expressing our selves unbecoming the Gravitie of so sacred an Employment. Wherefore Sir, the Complement we receive when we come out of the Church, I could in great earnest passe upon you. and thank you for your great pains, if I thought it probable that the stories you tell, would onely shame us and make us more wary in what we do & not over
and

and above make the whole Clergy more contemptible than yet we are. Yea it might not have been amiss too, if you had whipt us for two other Childishnesses of ours, the odde Tones and the mimical Gestures, whereby manie of us squeak and puppet it, and make ourselves ridiculous to our hearers, by making as much sport with the manner, as with the matter of our Sermons.

But Sir, while you were upon this Argument, was it well done to talk at that rate, as if you design'd to bring the whole office of Preaching into Contempt? If I had the rich vein of wit, whereby you are so admirably qualified, I might undertake to pick something out of the best Sermon that hath been preached any time this hundred years, that may as well be laugh'd at, as some of those things which you seem to me to abuse us for.

If we would prepare the at-

rection of our Auditours, and by a
 Preface perswade them that we
 have somewhat considerable to
 say; then we run the hazard of your
 displeasure, for though you do not
 bluntly condemn all Prefaces, (and
 you would not be overwise if you
 did) yet with a certain siness you
 insinuate, that there is somewhat
 throughout the whole method of
 our Preaching, which makes us
 contemptible. And the first thing
 you take notice of, is, *Before the
 Text be divided, a Preface is to be
 made; and afterwards, Having made
 the way to the Text as (smooth and
 plain as any thing, with a preface
 perhaps from Adam, &c. p. 64. & 66,*
 by which it seems to me that our
 very Prefacings are slighted and
 meanly spoken of. Some men would
 have brought you twenty Aurbours
 and more, to Prove the Conve-
 niency of this manner of beginning
 our Sermons, and would have con-
 cluded with the Example of Saint
 Luk.

Lake. But I onely say, that it is more then I understand, why a Preface may not do as well in the *common Method of preaching*, as it does in the *common Method of other Cratory*. And I dare be hold to promise for you, that if our generall Custom were to begin thus, *The Doctrine that is plainly contain'd in these words, is this, &c.* you would make your self more merry with that Method, than you do with this. Indeed, Sir, I think what course soever we take, you would find fault with us. But it is a certain sort of Prefaces at which you carp. *It is a great chance if first of all we do not make our Text like somewhat,* p.64. And is it not a sufficient Answer to say, *It is a great chance if we do?* For every *may be* hath a *may not be*. I know a Minister who tells me, he is not so Idle as to look over all his Notes for this purpose; yet he doth not call to mind, that in five hundred Sermons and above which he

he hath by him, he hath two be-
 ginnings with such a kind of preface
 But if our Text be indeed like any
 thing, why is it absurd to say it is
 so? And now methinks my Text like
 an Ingenious Picture, looks upon all
 here present, &c. p. 65. And what
 great harm, I pray, Sir, in all this?
 If such a thing as this make us de-
 spised, it is because men have a mind
 to despise us. Methinks, Sir, your
 Letter, like a *disingenuous Squint*,
 looks with an evil eye upon every
 thing we do, and you seek occasions
 to undervalue us. What unhand-
 someness is there, if while I am
 prefacing to such a text as this, *Tribu-
 tion and anguish to every soul of
 man that doth evil*, &c. I should say,
 My Text is like the Hand-writing
 upon the wall, that made *Belsazar*
 tremble. Or if I should signify my
 good wishes that the words of my
 Text may be as *goads and as nails*
fastn'd by the Masters of Assemblies,
 that they may make some impression
 upon

upon my Hearers. Would you not count this an harsh Comparison? It is well *Solomon* was a Wise man, who before us made such a Comparison of the words of the Wife. Other likenesses may be as excusable as these, though I do not say that all are. Nor is it so strange a thing, that a Text towards the end of the Bible, should have a Preface from *Adam*; for there is a great affinity between the *Old Testament* and the *New*. And divers Texts in the *New Testament* do plainly refer to the *First Adam*. But be the Preface what it will, *you are sufficiently resolv'd to laugh at it*. If I am over-venturous in so saying, it is you, Sir, that set me the Example, who conclude that the Preacher, whatever his Text had been, was *sufficiently resolv'd so make it like an Ingenious picture*.

You follow us to the *Dividing of our Texts*, and there you find better sport. whereas if you were a Pyrrho-

gotten

great that abominated that which
 recedes from Unity; it is hard for
 us in this case to make use of any
 manner of speaking so innocent, but
 you will account it to our disad-
 vantage. Though it be the *Nature*
 of a Proposition to consist of a *Subject*
 and a *Predicate*, yet you will not
 give us leave to say that the words
naturally fall asunder. It is but
 rarely that our Texts drop and melt
 asunder, now and then it may be in a
 great measure: And peradventure if we
 had not an unexceptionable Pre-
 sident, you would laugh at us for
 saying, Our *Doctrine drops as the*
rain, and distills as the Dew, Nor is
 it any thing more strange that our
 Text should sometimes *unravel*, than
 that a proposition should be a
Complex Theam. Yea, what if they
 divide themselves? For why may not
 words divide themselves as well as
 things speak: and who ever abus'd
 an Oratour, for saying in a plain
 case, *Res ipsa loquitur*? Sir, these
 are

are but forms of speaking, no more ridiculous than forms of Law, or Customary Expressions and Transitions in *Latine* Orations. Not that I take upon me to excuse all we do in this case: You have mention'd some things unhappy enough, but if you had pleas'd to have done us a *kindness* if it be not *right*, you might have omitted making such general Reflections upon all the *Divisions* we make, and you may charitably believe that sometimes we shew as good *Logick* in dividing a Text, as any your Tutor read to you at the University. If we should not divide our Texts at all, what then? Would you not tel us, that we amuse our people with confused immethodicall Discourses? Certainly you would have as much reason for it. Wherefore again it is our unhappiness to fall into the hands of so witty a Gentleman, who what course soever we take, will find fault with us.

You

You have taken too much notice of our Ignorance to believe, that we can raise any very cunning Doctrines and Observations; yet the truth is, we please our selves sometimes in thinking we do so. I shall not trouble you with excuses for those stories you have instanced in, (though I am not altogether so ignorant, as not to know that somewhat may be said in excuse for some of them) now that you have so friendly admonished us, I hope we shall mend for the time to come. But if you please, we will a little debate another point.

Whether or no we do ill, although it be in our Countrey Churches to sprinkle a little *Latine* and *Greek* sometimes about our Sermons. I am not fit to judge which is the best manner of the two, to preach nothing but *English* or to mix now and then a *Latine* Sentence. Old Mr. Dod I have been told, used to say, So much *Latine*, so much *Flesh* in.

in a Sermon; but all men are not altogether of that minde. If I must determine any thing, I would say they are both best. There may be reasons why it may be sometimes best to do so, and sometimes best otherwise. It is enough if I can give any reasons, that may make it allowable, at least so far as that we do not make our selves ridiculous in so doing.

And first, fir, you your self have furnished us with one reason. If we may judge of others of your quality by your self, we may conclude, there is a number of Gentlemen in *England* of great parts, that have a mean opinion of us Ministers, because of our great Ignorance; wherefore why may we not be allowed now and then (not often, for you shall very rarely finde that we bring in *twenty Poets and Philosophers* into an *hours* talk, and that we spread our selves in abundance of *Greek and Latine*) to discover a little of that
 Learn-

Learning that we have, that we may not be counted more ignorant than indeed we are. Now we find how the world goes, that our Credit is low, why may you not judge, that what we do, is not for *simple phantastick Glory*, but rather for the preserving our Reputation among those who are ready to lessen it. If there were nothing else in it, yet is not this something? Our learning is not great, but we are abused; and they who do not love us, suppose it to be less than it is; therefore it stands us in hand to make the best of our own case, when others represent it to the world. But this is not all.

There is you know in some words and in some sentences, a certain significancy and fulness of sense in our Language, which cannot so easily nor so shordly be exprest in another; such as are many happily compounded words in *Plutarch*, and many Proverbs and wise Say.

Sayings in both Languages. Now if there be but one or two Scholars in the Church, yet we may hereby convey somewhat to their understandings with a greater clearness and perspicuity, then if we were all in our own Language. Or if nobody in the Congregation look so like a Scholar as our poor selves, yet may we do our selves a kindness, by helping our own Understandings, and quickening our Memories as to some Notions, which after the Sentence of *Latine* or *Greek* is past, our descantings upon may be as profitable to our hearers, as any part of our Sermon, but if we had no such thing in our Notes, we might lose some of the fulness of the sense, for want of preserving it in the Original Proverb.

And yet again it concerns us sometimes to let our people know what Authority we have for what we say. We give our opinion concerning the meaning of such a Text, and

and we confirm it by the Exposition of such a Learned man; or we endeavour to prove the lawfulness of some Usages in the Church from the Authority of some of the Fathers; or we have occasion to speak of the state of the primitive Church while under Persecution; or else divers occasions offer themselves to take notice of Heathen Authors. The Doctrine of the Gospel, and the reasonableness of Christian Religion and the equity of Moral Vertues are not new Inventions of this Age, they have been know and talkt of, and writ about many years ago. If now while we are quoting of an Author for the confirmation of what we say, we quote him in his own language, though our people do not understand it, till we English it, yet it is a satisfaction that we do not impose upon them. And I have heard mean people, and as to matters of Sc'olarship very ignorant, talk with a great deal of pleasure

pleasure of St. *Austin* and other
men, whom they have often heard
of in the Pulpit, upon no other ac-
count, than because they have heard
us quote somewhat considerable out
of them.

Together with all this, it is a
Consideration not altogether un-
worthy of those who do not think
themselves the only wise men in the
world, that many wise men have
used this way of preaching, so wise
and so modest withall, that it may be
reasonably presumed, they have not
out of *simple ignorance* *Glory* to
speak a little *Latine* in the Pulpit,
but they have judg'd it fit for them
so to do.

These things I have offer'd; sit,
not much in my own defence, for I
am not greatly guilty in this kind.
It may be those of my Brethren who
are given to this way, can give
better reasons than I have sug-
gested in their own Vindications,
however it seems to me that they
are

are sufficient to deliver them from being despis'd upon this account, unless they be very lavish in this kind where there is little reason. For though I wold say that this practice may sometimes and in some places be justifi'd yet I am far from falling into the other extrem. You seem to condemn all mixtures of other Languages, I have excus'd some, and yet do acknowledge, that we may do very foolishly, in talking abundance of *Latine* to those who scarce understand plain *English*.

There is another thing you reproach us for, viz. The little sentences we sometimes interpose to mollifie what we are about to say, *As it were*, and *as I may so say*, and *with Reverence he is spoken*; as if you thought we were the bolder to venture upon Blasphemy under the guard of these words Blister'd be that Tongue that will be bold to blasphame, whether it be with or without an excuse; and so far as we

do in this manner usher in any thing of that nature spare us not. But might you not have acknowledg'd, that we may very innocently use such forms of words as these? Do not good Oratours without any disparagement to themselves, often say, *Si is eloqui liceat*, and *deum verbo venio*, and the like? Why shou'd this be more offensive in *English* than *Latine*. And is there not an *Armos* in Divinity, (but may be you'l laugh at it, because Systematical Divines use it) *Quæ Scriptura loquitur de deo* *Armos* *debeant intelligi* *Corporum* God himself speaks some things in his holy Word, which we may not repeat without Reverence. There are Similitudes not very harsh; but the infinite distance between the Almighty God and us sorry Creatures, requires as well an Awe in our Understandings, as the Reverence of our Bodies. But here also as well as elsewhere the faults you find with

are without any just limits, or any favourable acknowledgements, that such words are sometimes becomingly and well used, as well as unbecomingly and ill at other times.

When you had reckon'd up; things whereby we disparage our selves; *Harsh Metaphors, Childish Similitudes, and ill applied Tales*, and had tickled your spleen with the two first, you forgot to take notice of the third: Wherefore you may give me leave to follow your Example, and omit any discourse of the other two. But I will take so much notice of them, as to yield to you, that many of the instances you give in these, as well as those that follow in the *Observations*, are sufficiently to disrepute of those whom you quote for them. But if you had added many more to them, I do not see why it should be any more to the discredit of the Clergy in general, then why if 2 or 3 Plumbseers in *London* (a word you have taught

me) should sell rotten Plumbs, all the Grocers in the city should thereby lose their Credit. The Clergy-men in *England* are very numerous, and you have taken the liberty to look backward many years, ten or a dozen years to my knowledge, for some of the stories: Nay, there is one among the rest (that of *Abraham's* begetting *Isaac*) may be thirty or forty years old or more, for any thing I know; for it was superannuated and almost out of date above twenty years ago. And what if out of twenty or thirty years Sermons, may be rak'd up twenty or thirty passages not very accurate or Scholar-like, why should the rest that are learned and grave and such as become men in our Capacities to Preach, suffer upon the account of those few. Especially if it be consider'd that the distempers and troubles of the late times, did influence, as upon many of the Liety to make them poor, so upon many of the Cler-

Clergy also to disturb their Studies.

It is well known how many raw men and unexperie'd in this great Employment, skip up without any controll into the Pulpit, without any sufficient *Order* for so doing. It does also deserve to be added, that you report things to their disadvantage: For those stories whereby you tell us how some men pick out cunning Texts to prove a Doctrine, which no body would think were contained in it, I cannot think are so bad as you represent them. For if I may guess at the rest by one, you have done I doubt, some wrong to the memory of that witty man, (for I think I know who you mean) whose Text was about the multitude of thoughts, Ps. 94. Probably enough he might glance a little upon *Election* and *Reprobation*, for a man upon such a Text may wander far if he please; but that he

took that Text on purpose to discourse upon that Argument or that he rais'd that Doctrine thence, and did spend any considerable time to follow it, I much doubt, and have a great deal of reason to do so, for I may do it, without bringing any Suspicion upon your integrity in citing of it. For though you would have it believ'd that he so said, yet I perceive those words, *The Doctrine that naturally flows from these words*, are not the Preachers words, but your own.

But I say no more in extenuation of any Extravagancies of Preachers because in earnest I acknowledge that we are too often culpable, and the matter as well as manner of our Preaching might be to better purpose than it is, if we would take all due care to avoid those ridiculous Impertinencies, which though not so frequent as you suppose, yet are frequent enough to expose us to
some

some Contempt among wise and understanding men.

Thus far, Sir I have enquired whether all those things you charge us with, be indeed faults or so great faults as to make us contemptible: It remains to consider whether we are guilty of some other things which you do reckon up and reproach us for, of which sort I enquire but unto two. Whether we be guilty of accomodating our selves to the humour of the chief man of the Parish, without considering the necessities and capacities of our meaner people. And whether we be so idle as not to begin to study our Sermons till *Friday* night or *Saturday*, or it may be *Sunday* morning. You tell us (p. 41.) that sometimes we *Preach out of Complement to the all-wise Patron, and all-understanding Justice of Peace, &c.* and you know severall of that disposition, who if they chance to have a man of Learning and Understanding

say more than the rest of the Parish,
 Preach wholly at him, and trust
 most of their discourses at his
 supposed capacity, and the rest of
 the good people shall have only a
 handsome gaze or view of the Parson
 Truly, Sir, you may know more
 than I know ; for I am an igno-
 rant Minister, yet I hope you are
 mistaken in this Charge, I hope also
 you believe those Gentlemen are so
 wise and so honest, that if we
 should be disposed to humour them
 they would civilly advise us to have
 regard to the rest of our Parish, as
 well as to them alone. And a little
 distinction may save our Credit in
 this case. We may have respect to
 the *Learning*, when we have no re-
 spect to the *Humors* of those few
 Scholars that are our Auditors: So
 long as we go no farther than the
 first of these, we do nothing but
 what becomes us well, and what
 may be a great advantage to us in
 our preaching. Give me leave, Sir,

to

(25)
to tell you a story. I knew a Learned
Divine, who died within this seven
years, that lived in an obscure corner
of the Countrey; but where upon
occasion, persons of better quality
than his ordinary Parishoners did
sometimes come, wherefore to make
his work, he always carried two
Sermons with him to Church; and
when he got into the Pulpit, and
had looked round about him, if he
found any strangers there, he would
give them the more accurate Ser-
mon; (and if he listed he could
preach with great accuracy)
but if he observ'd none but
his own Neighbours he would
content them with his ordinary
way of Preaching, which was
more homely and dry, but that
which he thought was good
enough for farmers and Shepherds.
Verily, Sir, it is a great temptation
to us, when we know no body is
like to hear us, but persons of an
inferiour understanding as will be
con-

condition, to be more slight in our preparations, and careless in our Studies; for it need be, we may think to put them off with an affectionate noise instead of substantial matter. But if there be but one or two persons of good Understanding, who either do, or may come to Church, it is a restraint to us; We must for Reputations sake (which may be quickly lost) well consider what we intend to say. He was no fool that said, *Dnus mihi pro populo*: One Gentleman in the Parish may espy more faultiness in our Sermons than all the parish beside, It concerns us therefore so far to preach to them, as to have some peculiar regard to their Learning so as we may say nothing but what we apprehend fit for an intelligent person to hear, & while we are thus doing, we do not unworthily & couchingly accommodate our selves to the gentleman with whom we hope to dine. It is fitting for us to desire to improve

prove our selves to an understanding
 Auditour; and we do without any
 shame own it that we do so far
 stand in awe of a severe judgment,
 as that we believe our selves to
 preach the better, for having re-
 spect to what may be fit to say be-
 fore such an one. Yea, I think it were
 happy for the Church, if al Country
 Ministers that live in by-holes, had
 a Gentleman of worth and parts in
 their parish, not only for the other
 favors which they may hope to
 receive from them, but upon this
 account, that our Sermons may be
 studied with more Care, and
 Preach'd with less Exception. I am
 willing to hope this is that you
 mean in your Charge; which if you
 do, we confess the fact but deny
 the guilt. We have this regard to
 the better sort of persons in our
 Parish and we are not blameable for
 it. But if you mean we have re-
 spect to the humours of the Gen-
 tlemen that hear us, as it is not

proper for the place wherein you
 speake of it so we hope we do not
 deserve to be charg'd with it, and
 till you better prove it, in our Vin-
 dication I take the liberty to deny
 it. But if you mean as probably
 you do, that we strive to preach
 learnedly, because of on or two
 learned men that hear us when the
 rest of the people understand no-
 thing this also til it be better proved,
 may honestly be denied. We may have
 respect to their Understanding,
 upon the reason which I have alrea-
 dy given although we do not la-
 bour to rise above the capacity of
 our meane Auditours.

With the same fineness you use in
 other cases, you bring us under a
 Suspicion of preaching venturouslie
 and rawlie, but verie little pre-
 mitating what we intend to say.
 There are you say very few Texts
 can be divided at soonest before Fri-
 day night, and some there are will
 never be divided, but upon Sunday
 morning

morning, and that not very early;
 but rather a little before they go, or
 in their going to Church, (p. 85) And
 are we not the more to be admir'd
 that we preach so well as we do
 upon so short warning, and with so
 slender Preparations? Is it not fitting
 you should recant one of the two?
 Either we are not so very Ignorant,
 or not so very Idle as you tell the
 world we are. If our Ignorance were
 so deplorable, and made us so con-
 temptible, it is very strange we
 should be able to do any thing in
 the Pulpit at all without a great
 deal of pains taking: But if this
 letter be true, that we do neglect
 our Studies, and spend but few
 thoughts upon our Texts before we
 preach, as if we did think and
 speak both together, it cannot be
 that we should be so dull and memo-
 rapped, such poor Scholars as to lie
 upon that account the scorn of the
 world. How bravely might we do
 if we would study hard, who can
 upon

upon a veriefew hours thought
 preach fo well as commonlie we
 do!

But, Sir, though I have fupposed
 what if it should, yet I must not
 grant that it is true. We take
 more pains than you are aware of.
 For good Sir, how do you know the
 contrary. We are not worth your
 acquaintance fure, We are too
 Ignorant and poor, of too mean a
 condition to be fit company for fo
 accomplisht a Gentleman. How
 come you to understand fo well what
 we do, unlefs you would confirm the
 opinion of your travelling the
 Countrey, and fearching like a Spie
 into the manner of our fpending our
 time. It is a very hard thing to
 pronounce for the whole Clergy of
England, that there are few of us
 who begin to make our Sermons be-
 fore *Friday* night, (for our Pre-
 faces are not fo long, as that the
 dividing of our Texts comes far be-
 hind th: beginning) and fome not be-

before *Sunday* morning. If you knew a few that do so, and from those few particulars would infer, that generally we all do so, that is no good Logick. You may read of *Dr. Hammond*, that by reason of his mighty parts and great reading and his much thoughtfulness in the course of his Studies, he did compose the Sermons he preach'd in the Countrey with no great labour. And some few others who know their strength may be bold: and very possibly some that have less reason may be more confident, because of a voluble Tongue) than becomes them, and may preach slightly. But that the greatest number of us take little or no time to study our Sermons, till you have better proved it, (and *Affirmantis est probare*) I have the confidence to deny it. It may be many of us do not set our selves to write our Notes till towards the end of the week; but we can study before we write,

we

we may all the week long at several times be casting our thoughts upon our *Texts*, into a certain method, and digesting into some good order, what we intend first to write, and then to preach.

If you had been disposed to do us a kindness, and to deliver us from Contempt, you might have let this altogether alone; and if you did not think good to commend us for our *Studiousness*, yet you needed not have blamed us for that, which it is impossible you should have a certain knowledge of: for neither you nor any other man living can be so intimately acquainted with a matter of nine or ten thousand Preachers, (and such a number there is in *England*) as to know what time of the week they use to set themselves first to study their Sermons. You profess your self an honest and hearty *Wisher*, that we might be well *acquainted* in our Profession. You might if you had pleased, have contributed somewhat

What more then you have done to
 the success of these Wishes. You
 need not have represented every
 thing to our disadvantage. If there
 be faults in our Preaching, (as there
 are too many) you might have
 mollified them somewhat without
 any dishonour to a Gentleman of
 your Quality and Wit, and you have
 a fair President for it, one who was
 accounted a Wit in his time, and I
 think your modesty will allow him
 somewhat comparable to your self:
 The Excellent Mr. Herbert (who
 shall conclude this part of the trouble
 I give you) even when he could find
 fault with our Coat, speaks thus
 in our Defence.

*Judge not the Preacher, for he is thy
 Judge,
 If thou mislike him thou conceiv'st
 him not;
 God calleth Preaching folly, do not
 grudge.
 To pick out treasures from an earthen
 Pot.*

The

The worst speaks something good, if
we all want sense:

God takes a Text, and preaches
Patience.

Just not at Preachers language or
expression,

How know'st thou but thy fits made
him miscarry?

When turn thy faults and his, into
a confession,

God sent him whatsoever he be: O
silly

And love him for his Master, his
old condition,

Though it be ill, makes him no ill Phy-
sician.

5. I have, Sir, but one Enquiry
more to make, Whether if we are
as you represent us. and are there-
fore despised; you have taken a
probable course to heal our Wound,
and to deliver us from that Con-
tempt, which you profess your self
sorry

Sorry for, because we lye under.
 You seem to me to write after such
 a manner, as will increase our Con-
 tempt among those, who will do
 you the honour to have a favourable
 opinion of your Undertaking. Who
 ever thought that *Selden's History*
 of *Tyrus* did the Clergy a great
 kindness, though it bear a fair face,
 and may have much truth in it? Or,
 there is another Book nearer a kin
 to yours, even that which is thought
 to give the provocation to *Selden*,
 (how truly I know not) who ever
 thought that the Comedy of
Ignoramus would make the Lawyers
 speak better Latine, or increase their
 Credit. Such a kind of piece is
 your Letter of Enquiry, a piece of
 Drollery and Fancy, a merry mak-
 ing at our misfortunes. You pre-
 tend to pity us, but you do all the
 while laugh at us. Your Style is
 pungent, and enters a little too deep.
 It is a grave Subject you enquire
 into

into, and Lucas in sober sadness
 deserves to be enquired into, but
 the manner of your Enquiry is too
 facetious and iocular, and too like a
Pravvrisaters speech, though in
 one place you fall so foul upon those
 Exercises of Wit in the Univerſities
 I confess there is some oddness
 between a Sermon and a Letter; but
 as we take a Text, so you take a
 Theme to discourse on, *The Grounds
 and Occasions of the Contempt of the
 Clergy*; a weighty and serious
 Argument, if you had dealt with it
 accordingly. True it is that
Sportiveness and Drillery is so much
 the humour of the times, that if
 you had written after another
 fashion, some hundreds of Copies
 might have lain upon the Booksellers
 hands. It may also be
 that as

*A Verse may find him who a Sermon
 flies*, So you may better laugh at
 out of what is indecorous, and
 administer Occasion to our Con-
 tempt,

scape, than if you made an Use of
 Reproof, and did severely chide us.
 But, Sir, after you have well con-
 sider'd the quality of the persons
 who slight us. Will you say plainly,
 which you think will first come to
 pass? Shall you sooner laugh us out
 of our Indecencies, or will you not
 much sooner laugh them into a
 great disposition of contemning us.
 You have, Sir, led the Dance, and
 so many as follow your Measures,
 will by your manner of speaking be
 abundantly instructed to have a still
 more in derision. When we are in
 Gowns and Cassocks gravely ha-
 bited, we hope to be respectfully
 treated from our Neighbours for
 our gravity sake. But you have
 drawn the Picture of a *Parson in
 purple*, and dejected us of all those
 things that were Ornamental about
 us, (say verily you will hardly be-
 lieve that we have Breeches under
 our Cassocks) that our people may
 not securely jest at us. You blame

as much for *harsh Metaphors*, and in the mean time you exceed as much in *over reaching Hyperbole*. Either you expect your Reader should believe nothing you say, and then you play the fool; and write to no purpose, or you would have him believe all, and then you do little better, than play the knave; for you very well know, the Relation you give whether of our *Ignorance* or *Poverty*, is exceeding y. Hyperbolic; or you leave it to the discretion of your Reader to make more favourable allowances to your *Hyperbole's*, than you do to our *Metaphors*. But you should then have given them a better example, and not to have tempted them to say that which themselves do not believe. As I hope, Sir, you do not think us so ridiculous as you make us, whatever your reason may be for so doing. If you are of opinion, that *desperate Diseases* must have *desperate Remedies*, and there-
fore

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Wh
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fore you somewhat overdo, because
 nothing else will cure us; you may
 if you please try another course.
 When you see a fit Parsonage ready
 to incline to you, and in hopes of
 that take Holy Orders, get a
 Licence to be University Preacher.
 Then shew your Zeal, and do what
 you can to procure Honour and
 Reverence to the Clergy. Set up
 a running Lecture through the chief
 Market-towns of a Country or two;
 and while you are preaching two or
 three Sermons in a place, invite all
 the Neighbour Ministers to hear
 you, set them a Copy after what
 manner they shall preach. As you
 have already told us where we do
 ill, so then shew us by your Example
 to do better turn out of the *Common
 Method of Preaching*: Make no
Prefaces: Trouble not your self to
divide the Text. Labour not for
 any *running Observations* or *In-
 ferences* which are the practices
 whereby we make our selves
 ridi-

ridiculous : But behave your self
 gravely and solemnly, and like a
 man that may not be ashamed to
 reprove others for their follies. It
 may be this may do more good than
 your *Letter*. If you care not to
 take this trouble upon you, then stay
 a while before you abuse us any
 more. If ever you are like to be
 come one of us, after a seven years
 Exercise in our Sacred employment,
 review your own Sermons, and if
 you can find nothing that a severe
 Judgement or Critical Wit can find
 fault with, then and not till then
 abuse us at your pleasure: It is too
 late to say now, *Do not cast the first
 stone at us*, till you know whether
 your self be without sin. But if you
 persist in the same humour of de-
 spising us, peradventure it may be
 time to say then,

*Eum tuas per villam, cum multo lippas
 inanis,
 Cur in amicorum visis tuis con-
 sentiam.*

I wish

I wish I could confute that part
of your Letter which concerns our
poor y: But (though you
Hyperbolize grievously in that part
of your Discourse) there is too
much Truth in it to be con-
tradicted. Yet upon farther con-
sideration of the Matter, I find I
can't be as good as my word. You
are in too pleasant a vein for me to
hit in with you. The Tune of *Alas*
poor Scholar is too merry a Ditty.
Instead of a pleasant new Tune, I
think it may as well become you
to fall in with me, and to acknow-
ledge that as *poor Job* deserved
better Comforters, so may *poor*
despis'd Admirers expect, that so
him that is afflicted, pity should be
show'd from his friend.

Sir, I have discours'd with you
all this while as with a Stranger, and
have very little betray'd that I have
any knowledge of you; if I am not
much mistaken, I know you well,
and if I know you, I love you for
old

old Acquaintance. But I have done that which I think were well if other Writers would do in their Arguings with one another; not so much discover their knowledge of the Person they undertake: for it often comes to pass, that when two men write one against another, the Cause is laid aside, and some personal quarrels raken up, in which their Readers are no more concern'd than we are in all the Duels that are fought in *France*. If my Information fail, and I know you not, yet I honour you, because I am perswaded you mean well. I have done you no dishonour by any thing I have said; whether I have done any thing for the Honour of my Order, the Reader must judge. Glad shall I be if I can preserve my Brethren from being farther despised. I never counted my self, nor was any body else ever so foolish, as to count me witty; if I have now and then ventur'd upon some ludicrous Expressions

pressions, it hath not been because
 my own Inclinations led me to
 them, but because in few words I
 thought, to answer such a Discourse
 as yours is altogether morosely and
 sowerly, would not do well. If I
 have not pleased you yet, I hope I
 shall in what I have yet to say,
 which is onely this: I put an End to
 the trouble I give you, and
 am

January 10.
 1670.

Sir,
 Your Humble Servant

W. S.

G 2

A

A POSTSCRIPT.

S I R,

YOU may see how hard it is for men to continue long in a good mind. I thought I had done, but the toy took me to read over your Letter once again, and I finde upon a Review, that I have omitted some things which do as well deserve to be consider'd, as many of those which I have taken notice of. I am not of the humour that *my Lord Verulam* reports some persons to be of, who when they write Letters, reserve the most important business for the *Postscript*, The main things I designed I have dispatcht, but some slip from me: Which I say, because I would neither have you nor my Readers think, that by
 vertue

of an old Maxim, *Qui tacet con-*
sentire videtur, I approve of all that
 I do not expressly disallow; and hav-
 ing said so, I am willing to save you
 the labour of following me in a long
 reckoning up of all those things I
 mean. I trouble you with a little
 Animadversion upon one Para-
 graph of your Letter. That is p.
 19. where you reflect upon the
 Gentlemen that keep Chaplains. It
 is not, Sir, to be denied, but some
 of them may be a little too severely
 and unhand somely dealt with. But
 I wish you had spoken a little more
 respectfully and civilly both of those
 Gentlemen and their Chaplains too
 for these Reasons.

There are many Gentlemen will
 not trouble themselves with so idle
 a Piece of Household stuff as a Cha-
 plain is; none of the Family can be
 better spared, no Expences be better
 renounced, than that needless
 Wages which he receives. Now,
 Sir, if there be any of the Gentry of

England so inclinable to Debauchery, as that the presence of a Chaplain would be burdensome to them, and therefore they chuse to be without; you cannot but think you would have pleased many men, if you had spoken a little honourably of that kind of life; and you might have encouraged the Gentry to believe that a Chaplain would not devour so much of their Estates as a pack of Dogs will. And if you had done the Church no service in bespeaking such provision for young Scholars, yet you might have done somewhat to the Commonwealth, in being an instrument to recover the Gentry from some of their Excesses. You have taught them to despise us, and you cannot but believe, that what we say will be little effectual; but if a Gentleman of so great Ingenuity and so admirable Parts as your self, should tell them; it would be for the Honour of their Name and House, for the Encouragement of

of Learning and Piety, to have in their Houses some young Scholars of rare Parts and good Improvements, they might listen to you, and you might thus do the world good service.

Or if you had not thought it worth your while to have made this attempt, yet at least you might have acknowledged, that there are some Gentlemen in *England* (how few soever, who treat their Chaplains with all fair and good respect; who make them much their companions and Friends; who retain them upon no low and mean accounts, but for excellent purposes, *viz.* That the Exercises of piety in their Families may be perform'd with Gravity and Devotion as becomes such holy Services: And collateral to this, that they may have the opportunity and satisfaction, of training up Divines for more publick Service afterwards. When it shall happen, that they live to see them well fixed in
 that

that Sacred Employment, the Cure of Souls; it cannot but be a great Contentment and Pleasure to them to reflect upon what is past, and say, There is such a Worthy Divine who was forc'd to leave the *University* very young, and if I had not taken him into my Family, and given him Leisure and Encouragement to follow his Studies, he might have hunted after a poor Curateship as soon he was Batchelour of Arts; where a constant Employment so soon, wou'd have spoil'd his Growth in Learning, that he should never have reach'd that Repute he now lives in.

Neither, Sir, have every one of these Gentlemen a *Cozen Abigail* to dispose of; or if they had, it is to be hoped they detest that *Symony* that goes under you know what opprobrious name.

You may, Sir, fancy those of our Profession to be a Company of sneaking low spirited men, who know not what belongs to Honour
and

and reputation; & therefore you may deal with ~~us~~ as you please: But you might have remembered that *Gentlemen* are very tender in that point, if they should chance to enter the lists with you, you would find their *Pens* as sharp in this kind of *Duel*, as their *Swords* are in others. We may write languidly and dully, and the *Offers* that we make may not come home, but they are able to make sharp *thrusts*, and to wound your Reputation, it may be as much as you have done ours. I do not unsay what I have said, you may be company fit for them, and they may commend you for your Wit, yet chastise you also frowning it upon them. You have heard of the Answer that Dr. *Jegon* of old gave to a knavish Lad of *Benet Colledge*,

*Knew but I the Lad that writ
These Verses in a brauer 7,
I would commend him for his Wit,
But whip him for his Knavery.*

You

you despise us as if we were not your match; wherefore we turn you over to some who are able to pay you in your own Cogn. and to deal with you at your own Weapon.

I am sorry I trespass upon your Patience, for I am longer than I thought to have been; I have but a word more, and so conclude, (You see, Sir, how naturally we fall into our old Road, this should have belong'd to my Sermon, which I have a'most finish'd for next *Sunday*, but now 'tis here let it go) if you have no respect to the Gentleman, yet have some pittie for the Chaplain. Do you know of never a Tutor in the University, that would be willing to prefer a poor Scholar (after he hath taken his first Degree) to some good Gentlemens house; and do you not believe it would be a good refuge and convenience to him. Nay, Sir, say, might it not be as probable a remedy to deliver the Clergy from Contempt, as any you have

(101)

have pointed at in all your *Lectures*.
Gentlemen were commonly so well
dispos'd, to entertain and accom-
modate some who design for
Divinity, but are disappointed of
their Expectations, and disabled
from staying seven years or longer
at the University. Surely the great-
est part of those who prove mean
Preachers, upon no other account so
much, as because they begin too
soon, would do the Church more
Service, and the Clergy more Ho-
nour, if they had such a convenient
Resting-place between the Univer-
sity and the Pulpit. But, Sir, I never
was a Chaplain, therefore I leave
this Point to be debated by those
who have greater Experience in
this Matter. And once more I am

January 17. Your humble Servant,

F I N I S.
